DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 057 960 RC 005 832

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TITLE Impact Analysis of an American Indian Literature Course on the Self-Image of Senior High School American Indian Students.
PUB DATE Jul 71
NOTE 56p.; Master's thesis submitted to Pennsylvania State University, University Park

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *American Indians; Content Reading; *Cultural Awareness; Educationally Disadvantaged; *High School Students; Individualized Reading; *Literature Programs; Literature Reviews; Reading Material Selection; *Relevance (Education); Self Concept; Seniors; Socioeconomic Influences; Tables (Data)
IDENTIFIERS Sioux Indians

ABSTRACT

The results of a survey of 13 high school seniors of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe are analyzed in this 1971 study designed to test the impact of an American Indian literature course offered at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School. Results of a questionnaire given before and after the literature course are presented in tabular form showing, in percentages, the responses on which the following 4 conclusions are based: that students read more when the material concerned Indians; that students did not learn to enjoy reading more; that students realized the value of "reading to learn"; and that students learned about their culture and heritage from the course. Four recommendations are made: that larger samples be gathered; that questionnaires which would better measure attitudes toward pride and identity be used; that investigators experiment with students of different ages; and that a determination be made of whether the findings are statistically significant. A copy of the questionnaire, a 33-item bibliography, and a list of materials used in the course are included. (PS)

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The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

Department of Secondary Education

Impact Analysis of an American Indian Literature Course on the Self-Image of Senior High School American Indian Students

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A Paper in

Secondary Education

by

Sandra J. Fox

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Education

July, 1971

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RC005832

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Educators now feel that to do an effective job of teaching and preparing students for adult life, we must relate learning to students' lives; that is, we must create new materials and programs for culturally different students. Formerly, we treated all students alike; we stressed in our schools only the culture of the American white middle-class.[1]

Such a narrow focus explains why the education of the American Indian has been called a "tragedy;" their education is described as irrelevant to their lives and needs. Such an educational concept coupled with white teachers' perceptions of the Indian culture as "inferior," generated within Indian students poor self-concepts. Achievement levels for such students lag behind those of white students of comparable grade levels by two or three years. Dropout rates for Indian students at all grade levels are twice those of the national average for whites.[2]

Because of the new drive for relevancy of school to students, there are many programs and educational materials being researched and published to be used with the disadvantaged and culturally different.

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[1] A. Harry Passow, "Education in Depressed Areas," Education of the Disadvantaged (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1967), pp. 333-351.

[2] United States Congress, Senate, Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, Indian Education: A National Tragedy-A National Challenge, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969), pp. ix-x.

In junior high and secondary school such literature programs as Scope[3] and Hooked on Books contain literature which reported the lives and interests of disadvantaged and culturally different people from many ethnic groups. Hooked on Books in 1968 was being used in 37 states and three foreign countries.[4] There are Afro-American literature programs for black students.[5]

Unfortunately, there has been little research dealing with special programs and materials for American Indian students. There is much said about the necessity of helping the Indian student to preserve his identity and to develop a pride in his heritage by including aspects of his own culture in the curriculum, but very little is actually being done to research and provide for this cause.[6]

From the first contact with the Indian, the school has been the main tool used to assimilate the Indian. The school was to force Indian children to abandon their cultural traditions and make them think and act as white middle-class Americans.[7]

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[3]John C. Bushman and others, Scope (Evanston, New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

[4]Robert Shafer, "Curriculum: New Perspectives," English Journal, LVII (May, 1968), 732.

[5]Kenneth Kinnamon, "Afro-American Literature, the Black Revolution, and Ghetto High Schools," English Journal, LIX (February, 1970), 189.

[6]Brewton Berry, The Education of American Indians: A Survey of the Literature prepared for the Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, United States Senate (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 69.

[7]United States Congress, op. cit., p. 9.

The school, however, did not assimilate the Indian as was expected. Indians still are trying to hold onto their culture, although much of it has been lost. As a result, Indians live in a combination of two different worlds and are frustrated.[8] "Our failure to provide an effective education for the American Indian has condemned him to a life of poverty and despair . . . The average Indian income is $1,500."[9] Alcoholism and mental health problems among Indians are great.[10] Many times there is no work or little work for Indians on reservations or in Indian communities, but they choose to remain there to retain their culture and identity.[11] Many times they do not qualify for jobs because, "the adult population has a much lower level of formal schooling than do other groups."[12] "Their education never suggested to them that they could be both Indians and productive members of American society."[13] Some acculturation and assimilation does occur, of course.[14]

A generation ago in the Meriam Report it was recommended that a relevant curriculum be provided for Indian students. The Meriam

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[8]Herbert A. Aurbach, Estelle Fuchs, and Gordon Macgregor, The Status of American Indian Education, An Interim Report of the National Study of American Indian Education to the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 1970), p. 1.

[9]United States Congress, op. cit., p. x.

[10]Ibid., p. 19.

[11]John Collier, Jr., "Indian Education," Commentary on the Proceedings of the National Research Conference of American Indian Education (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Society for the Study of Social Problems, 1967), p. 6. (Mimeographed.)

[12]Aurbach, op. cit., p. 107.

[13]Collier, loc. cit.

[14]United States Congress, op. cit., p. 200.

Report was a report on the social and economic conditions of the American Indian (1928), which called for a change of view on Indian education. An attempt was made, then, to include some Indian cultural aspects in the curriculum of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Schools. With the beginning of World War II, funds for this new program were stopped, and they were never appropriated again after the war.[15] "It was the formidable bureaucracy, the public culture of politicians and the private culture of BIA personnel, and above all the white Christian middle-class of all America that deemed this new horizon of education to failure."[16]

Today we see another attempt at putting Indian culture into the curriculum for Indian students. However, it is slow, the only noted research on a program of this kind being that done on the Rough Rock Demonstration School in Arizona which emphasizes bilingual instruction and the Indian cultural heritage.[17]

Some materials have been developed, but some of them apply to and are especially for only one tribe or group of Indians, such as the recently developed social studies units for Navajo students.[18] These materials would not be as relevant to other Indian students.

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[15] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[16] Collier, op. cit., p. 2.

[17] Robert Bergman and others, Problems of Cross-Cultural Educational Research and Evaluation: The Rough Rock Demonstration School (Minneapolis: Training Center for Community Programs, University of Minnesota, 1969), p. 4.

[18] Carol C. Stout, The Quest for the Four Parrots, Secondary Social Studies Unit for Navajo Students, Division of Education, Navajo Area, Bureau of Indian Affairs and College of Education, University of New Mexico, 1970).

A Special Subcommittee on Indian Education of the United States Senate found the following: 1. Public schools which educate Indian students seldom include anything on Indian history, culture, or language in their courses, and often use materials and approaches which are derogatory to Indians.[19] 2. Bureau of Indian Affairs schools have curricula which are not suitable for the needs and experiences of the students. There is little insight into cultural differences.[20] According to findings of the Carnegie Report, 1969, there is little done in schools to promote a sense of pride in heritage in Indian students.[21] The Senate Subcommittee's report, published in 1969, recommended that, among other things, funds be provided "for revising curricula to reflect the history, culture, and values of the Indian people the school serves."[22] "The BIA should establish a procedure for planning and evaluating education programs for Indian children."[23]

A national study on American Indian education was directed by Robert J. Havighurst of the University of Chicago. A summary of the study was published in 1970. Recommendations were made to improve Indian education. Again, it was recommended that courses or units on Indian history and culture be included in all schools where there are Indian students. It was also recommended that teachers should be encouraged to do research that would help them prepare materials for such curricula.[24]

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[19]United States Congress, op. cit., p. 53.

[20]Ibid., p. 101. [21]Ibid., p. 203. [22]Ibid., p. 205.

[23]Ibid., p. 122.

[24]Robert J. Havighurst, "The Education of Indian Children and Youth," National Study of American Indian Education (Series IV, No. 6; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), pp. 35-6.

Programs must be drawn up and projects must be tested. Research must be done to provide for revising and creating materials to be used in this new curricula.

At Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School, Eagle Butte, South Dakota, there have been introduced new courses: Acculturational Psychology, Sioux Language, and Sioux Arts and Crafts. Eighty percent of the school's students are Indian. Acculturational Psychology or Modern Indian Psychology was the first course to be introduced. It was first taught during the second semester of the school year 1969-70. This course developed from the work of Dr. John Bryde, University of South Dakota, and his text is used.[25] The effectiveness of this course at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School has not been researched.

A special project, Project Necessities, Brigham City, Utah, a subsidiary of a private corporation called ABT Associates, was funded by the BIA to create curriculum materials for Indian students in Bureau schools. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School students were involved in the field-testing of one of the units of instruction during the 1969-70 school year. Many materials, after having been field tested and revised, have been made available for use in Bureau schools. Teachers who participated in field testing the Economics Unit for Project Necessities received no research data as to the effectiveness for that program for the students specifically of Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School. Project Necessities' contract was not renewed after the school year of 1969-70.

Whether these programs have been effective for these students or not, the fact remains that more must be done.

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[25]John F. Bryde, Acculturational Psychology (Washington: United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1967).

Problem

The program described in this paper is an attempt at designing an Indian Literature course to be used for instructing Indian students of Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School.

This paper will attempt to answer the following questions: 1. As evidenced by a questionnaire given before and after the course and by number of books read, do Indian students enjoy reading more, and do they read more if the literature made available to them is about American Indians? 2. As evidenced by a questionnaire given before and after the course, do Indian students come to see the value of "reading to learn" from a study of Indian Literature? 3. As evidenced by a questionnaire given before and after the course, do Indian students learn effectively about their Indian culture and heritage from a study of Indian Literature? 4. As evidenced by a questionnaire given before and after the course, do Indian students learn effectively about the present situation and problems of American Indians from a study of Indian Literature? 5. As evidenced by a questionnaire given before and after the course, is an Indian Literature course an effective way to promote pride in culture and identity for Indian students?

Definition of Terms

Indian Literature in this paper means literature written by and about American Indian people. Selections used are by or about people of many different tribes, but emphasis is placed on the Sioux.

Culture refers to "a man's entire social heritage, all the knowledge, beliefs, customs, and skills he acquires as a member of society."[26]

Curriculum in this paper means "a group of courses and planned experiences which a students has under the guidance of a school."[27]

A disadvantaged student is "one for whom more than average effort is needed to achieve average performance in an average educational context."[28]

A Bureau of Indian Affairs School is one maintained by the federal government for American Indian students. Not all Indian students attend BIA schools, however.

Social maturity is "a state of development in which the attitudes, understandings, feelings, and skills of the individual with respect to human relationships, social tools, and social institutions are those which tend to be typical of the adult."[29]

Limitations

The students who participated in this program were seniors in high school and were volunteers who were interested in such a course. Findings of the study, then could not be generalized for all Indian students. The course was an elective course, and only seniors were allowed to register for the course because of their possible social

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[26]Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick, Sociology, (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 52.

[27]Carter V. Good (ed.), Dictionary of Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1959), p. 149.

[28]Robert L. Green (ed.), Racial Crisis in American Education (Chicago: Follett Educational Corporation, 1969), p. 191.

[29]Good, op. cit., p. 335.

maturity compared to that of other students. Social maturity was required because of the nature of some of the topics discussed and because of the nature of some of the books read.

The number of participants was limited to thirteen primarily to facilitate and have a small enough group for round table discussions; and also, the number was limited because of the materials and books that had to be purchased for the program.

The students who participated in this program were Sioux students of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. Some of the materials and methods used may not be suitable for use with Indian students of other tribes and areas.

The fact that the investigator was the instructor of this course may have biased the reporting of the study, although a genuine effort was made to report the observations as accurately as possible.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

Although there has not been much research done on curricula for Indian students, there has been much done on curricula for disadvantaged and culturally different students. There are many articles on teaching disadvantaged students. There are some articles and reports of programs used with Indian students, and there is mention of characteristics of Indian students.

The major sources consulted for a review of the literature were the card catalogue, Education Index,[1] and Encyclopedia of Educational Research.[2]

The material reviewed dated from 1960 to the present. Because this was a study of recent developments in education, only material from the last ten years was reviewed.

By the time educationally disadvantaged students reach junior or senior high school, they have probably developed a strong resistance to reading. The literature selected for elementary and secondary English and reading has had the effect of excluding and further

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[1] Minnie A. Seng (ed.), Education Index, A Cumulative Subject Index to a Selected List of Educational Periodicals, Proceedings and Yearbooks (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1961-1966).

[2] Robert L. Ebel (ed), Encyclopedia of Educational Research (fourth edition; New York: Macmillan Co., 1969).

alienating many of the children in our classrooms because the characters, problems, and settings are so different from their own experiences.[3] The literature should be relevant to the student's life.[4] Through this relevancy, we may be able to reach the primary goal of communicating effectively with our disadvantaged students.[5]

The teacher should be concerned with the attitude of students toward reading; he should not believe that attitude will improve with quantity.[6]

Daniel N. Fader, the author of Hooked on Books and Hooked on Books: Program and Proof, the English programs for disadvantaged students, believes that the approach to literature for disadvantaged students should be social rather than literary.[7] Marjorie Smiley, author of Gateway English, another program for disadvantaged students, believes that in the senior high school, especially, the literature program for disadvantaged students should include books which deal with personal and social problems.[8]

The major contribution of a special literature program for disadvantaged students is to help them gain a sense of their own

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[3]Marjorie B. Smiley, "Gateway English: Teaching English to Disadvantaged Students," English Journal, LIV (April, 1965), 268.

[4]Robert Shafer, "Curriculum: New Perspectives," English Journal, LVII (May, 1968), 733.

[5]Charles J. Calitri, "The Nature and Values of Culturally Different Youth," Improving English Skills of Culturally Different Youth (Washington: U. S. Office of Education, 1964), p. 9.

[6]Shafer, op. cit., p. 734.

[7]Ibid., p. 736.

[8]Smiley, op. cit., p. 273.

worth and their part in the American community.[9] The literature class is a place of socialization, a place where values and philosophies are dispersed.[10] Some ideas given by actions, characters, or values described in literature are strong enough to give students new insights into their own lives and the lives of others. This should contribute to the personal development of a student.[11]

The thematic approach to literature is the way to make literature a social, rather than a literary, study. It seems to work well with disadvantaged students. Works to be studied are selected because of their applicability to a theme, appropriateness to the level at which they are to be studied, and their potential appeal to adolescent readers. Themes are selected for their relevance to the personal and social concerns to students.[12]

The teacher should select and create his own reading materials for a program.[13] He needs to find books close to the lives of the students, but at the same time, they need to read books that tell of lives very different from their own. If the literature study is

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Calitri, loc. cit.

[11] David H. Russell, "Contributions of Reading to Personal Development," Teachers College Record, LXI (May, 1960), 435.

[12] Marjorie B. Smiley, "Gateway English-A Literature Program for Educationally Disadvantaged Students," Ivory, Apes, and Peacocks: The Literature Point of View (International Reading Association, 1968), pp. 86, 88-92, cited by Dwight L. Burton, Literature Study in the High Schools (third edition; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), pp. 224-6.

[13] Shafer, loc. cit.

to be social, students must learn about the lives of different people.[14] If a teacher is trying to influence the ideas and lives of young people through literature, he needs to know the content of the materials he is going to use.[15] Fader believes that paperback books should be the tools for reading for disadvantaged students, since, for them especially, the anthology represents all that is dull and foreign.[16] They relate better to paperback books.[17] Popular magazines and newspapers should be used as relevant and exciting parts of the curriculum.[18]

Disadvantaged students must be taught to make responsible decisions about their lives, educationally and socially. They must be taught to think, not just to memorize specific answers. Good discussions make students think.[19] However, too many class discussions are limited dialogues between the teacher and a few students.[20] One obstacle is that even average students have limited experiences of life and literature, and they are usually not sure of their personal values and have little confidence in their ability to judge or comment

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[14]Smiley, "Gateway English: Teaching . . ., p. 273.

[15]Russell, op. cit., p. 440.

[16]Shafer, op. cit., pp. 734-5.

[17]Smiley, "Gateway English: Teaching . . ., p. 273.

[18]Shafer, op. cit., p. 735.

[19]William Glasser, "Schools without Failure," The Instructor, LXXVIII (January, 1969), 60-1.

[20]Joseph P. Fotos, "A Proposal for Improving Class Discussions: The Frequency of Response Chart," English Journal, LVII (October, 1968), 1036.

on a literary work.[21] Thought-provoking questions related to students' lives usually promote discussion best. The class should sit in a circle. Students should never be graded on discussions.[22] Teachers must accept the fact that students will not use correct English.[23]

Composition must also be thought-provoking exercises based on something related to students' lives. In order to get students to write, too much emphasis should not be placed on correctness. Some papers might not even be handed in. They should be merely exercises in putting down and organizing thoughts, thoughts which might be private.[24] The Scope literature program for disadvantaged students emphasizes writing paragraphs and reports.[25]

Vocabulary is a problem for disadvantaged students. The Scope program uses a method of having students find words that mean such and such in certain paragraphs or on certain pages.[26] John Holt, author of "How Teachers Make Children Hate Reading," says that teachers overdo vocabulary study. Students will look up words if they want to. Reading, by itself, increases vocabulary.

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[21]Lawrence Rosinger, "The 'Class Answer' as a Teaching Device," English Journal, LVII (October, 1968), 1033.

[22]Glasser, op. cit., p. 86.

[23]Calitri, op. cit., p. 4.

[24]John Holt, "How Teachers Make Children Hate Reading," Redbook Magazine (November, 1967), 50-1.

[25]John C. Bushman and others, Scope (Evanston, New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

[26]Ibid.

We make children hate reading if we give them too many vocabulary exercises. We can encourage them to use the dictionary and teach them all they can learn about words from one.[27]

The Scope program has some questions for comprehension at the end of each selection.[28] John Holt says that we stress comprehension too much. Students do not need to understand everything they read, as long as they are enjoying reading. The teacher should suggest books for outside reading, but the students must be able to choose their own books. They should be able to criticize literature freely without fearing that what they say might not be the teacher's opinion. Sometimes the teacher should read aloud to students.[29]

In order to be educated to succeed, disadvantaged students must have a strong, positive emotional involvement with their teachers. Teachers must be personally involved.[30] The teacher must know something about the cultural background of the students he teaches and he must take it into consideration. Understanding the cultural background of a student aids the teacher in communicating with the student. Teachers must understand that disadvantaged students often come with poor self-concepts.[31] If a teacher is trying to influence the ideas and lives of young people through

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[27]Holt, op. cit., p. 50.

[28]Bushman, loc. cit.

[29]Holt, op. cit., pp. 50-1.

[30]Glasser, op. cit., p. 60.

[31]Calitri, op. cit., p. 7-9.

literature, he needs to know a great deal about his students.[32] The enthusiasm of the teacher in the classroom is perhaps the most important factor in encouraging students to read.[33]

In order to keep from labeling children as failures, we should eliminate grading.[34]

American Indian students have some specific problems or characteristics in school. For one, they don't like to talk, answer questions, or participate in discussions in school. "Student silence characterizes much of what goes on in the formal schooling of American Indian children."[35] One of the important findings in a study done by Mark Berman was that an Indian student assumed an active role in answering questions when the content in the course being taken was relevant and meant something to him.[36] In a study done by Robert V. Dumont, Jr., he concluded that conditions of silence are resultant of the fact that the teachers know almost nothing about the language or life styles of the students.[37] A suggestion given for asking Indian students questions is to ask

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[32]Russell, loc. cit.

[33]Shafer, op. cit., p. 737.

[34]Glasser, op. cit., p. 61.

[35]Robert V. Dumont, Jr., "Learning English and How to Be Silent: Studies in American Indian Classrooms" (1969), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

[36]Mark L. Berman, "The Development of Proficiency in the Use of the English Language in Groups of Non-Western Indigenous Peoples through Programmed Instruction: A Study in Applied Anthropology and Community Development" (Graduate Thesis, Arizona State University, Tempe, 1964), p. 66.

[37]Dumont, op. cit., p. 23.

only those questions which are within a student's ability range and accepting all answers and possibly building on them.[38]

Other suggestions for dealing with Indian students are not standing over them while they work and possibly trying to foster competition in the classroom. Indian students are generally not competitive. Care must be taken to eliminate as many adverse features of the learning environment as possible.[39]

Different approaches to instruction for Indian students must be based on differences among groups.[40] Care must be taken to fit learning programs to the student population involved. It is invalid to consider all Indians alike in nature and culture, although they do have much in common.[41]

In a study done by Berman, in which he used programmed instruction to facilitate projects of community development, Indian students expressed a desire that course work would help them with their futures. They read magazine articles and handed in written reports on them. The investigator reported that they seemed to enjoy reading the articles and that they were prompt on delivering assignments on their readings.[42]

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[38]Mark L. Berman, "Some Considerations in the Education of Indigenous Groups in the Southwest," (a professional paper, 1965), p. 7.

[39]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[40]Berman, "The Development . . ., p. viii.

[41]Berman, "Some Considerations . . ., p. 6.

[42]Berman, "The Development . . ., p. 141.

In a history course emphasizing Indian culture in Browning Public High School, Browning, Montana, many resource people, such as tribal council members, museum curators, and Bureau of Indian Affairs personnel were brought in to speak to the class.[43]

Some observations of Indian students at Wapato on the Yakima Indian Reservation were that vocabulary was a major problem for them, they had not had many of the experiences that other children have, they were not used to worrying about time and meeting time limits, and they had no ideas about how to set personal goals. They were reluctant to attempt any reading because they had very low aspiration levels and poor self-concepts. Most of the students said they hated reading, but it was thought that they really did want to learn to become good readers. They seemed not to have the same interests as other students. One strong interest area for reading seemed to be American Indian history and culture.[44]

"Literature through its dramatic impact can inculcate in the reader certain social and anthropological insights which the reader may not glean from reading sociology or anthropology texts."[45] It is believed that the reading of literature can play an important part in socialization. Perhaps the reading of selected literature can help in socializing the American Indian student.

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[43] G. R. McLaughlin, "High School History Course Highlights Indian Culture," Montana Education, XLIV (April, 1968), 18.

[44] Charles H. Hill, "Reading on the Reservation," Journal of Reading, XII (November, 1968), 125-8.

[45] Nancy L. Arnez, "Racial Understanding Through Literature," English Journal, LVIII (January, 1969), 57.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

There is a trend in education to make curricula more relevant to students. This study was an attempt to answer the following questions: 1. To find out whether a group of American Indian students would read more, 2. would enjoy reading more, and 3. would come to see the value of "reading to learn" if they were able to read material concerning American Indians. The study was done to find out 4. whether the students would learn about their culture and heritage and about the present problems of American Indians from reading material concerning American Indians, and 5. to find out whether reading of this material would promote pride in culture and identity in the students.

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was used as the tool to measure changes. The questionnaire was pretested with a group of students who were not in the experimental class to eliminate ambiguities.

The thirteen students in "American Indian Literature" class (the experimental class) were pretested and posttested with the questionnaire on September 21 and April 14, respectively.

From the personal data section of the questionnaire the following experimental group information is presented. Because environment including socio-economic conditions, family background, past experiences, and ability are very closely related to learning, this information was considered significant.

Six girls and seven boys comprised the experimental group. Nine of the thirteen were seventeen years old, three were eighteen, and one was twenty years old. Four of the students were full-bloods, one was seven-eighths Indian, two were three-fourths Indian, one was one-half Indian, and five of the students were one-fourth or less Indian. Nine had been in school eleven years, three had been in school twelve years, and one had been in school thirteen years before enrolling in the course.

Nine of the students had parents who were together, one had parents who were separated, one had parents who were divorced, and two had one parent who was deceased. One student came from a family of eleven children, one ten, one nine, one eight, one seven, three from families of six children, two from families of five children, two from families of four children, and one from a family of three children.

Eight of the students lived in the town of Eagle Butte, five lived in the school dormitory, four from the rural reservation, and one from an off-reservation city. Four had fathers who were ranchers, three had fathers who worked on construction, one father was retired, one was a tribal policeman, one father was a Community Action Program coordinator, and one father was unemployed. Six students had mothers who were housewives, one mother was a matron in the school dormitory, one was training to become a teacher through the Teacher Corps Program, one was a Head Start teacher, two were nurses' aides, one was a teacher's aide, and one mother was a community health aide.

Two of the students had fathers who had finished the seventh grade, four fathers had finished the eighth grade, three had finished the tenth, and two were high school graduates. Four mothers had finished the eighth grade, one mother had finished the ninth grade, one had finished the tenth, two had finished the eleventh, four were high school graduates, and one had had two years of college.

The students were also asked which subject they had liked best the previous year and which subject they had liked least. This was done to find out if they had liked or disliked literature courses or Indian courses from the year before. Two of the students had liked literature best, two of the students had liked literature least, two of the students had liked Indian Acculturational Psychology best. All students had taken a literature course the previous year; two students had taken Indian Acculturational Psychology the previous year.

National percentile reading scores for the students in the class were 11, 22, 28, 34, 34, 40, 46, 46, 48, 57, 57, 67, and 67 as evidenced by the Iowa Test of Educational Development. A student ranking in the 50th percentile would be average for his grade placement as compared with all other students of that level in the United States.

To test whether students learned to enjoy reading more from having taken a course in American Indian Literature, they were asked on the pretest and posttest questionnaire how much they enjoyed reading and how much they had enjoyed literature courses in high school.

To test whether the students read more when the literature was concerned with American Indians, the students were asked to put on

the pretest the number of books, approximately, they had read during one semester the previous year. This number would be compared with the number of books they read during the time when they were in the course.

To test whether or not students came to see the value of "reading to learn," they were asked how often they read the newspaper and magazines and how carefully they read them. Their answers to these same questions would be compared from the pretest and posttest.

To test whether students learned from the course, they were asked on the pretest and posttest how much they knew about Indian history and culture. They were questioned on how many ideas for solutions to problems of Indian people they had.

To test whether the students came to see the value of "reading to learn," the students were asked how they had learned about Indian history and culture on the pretest and on the posttest. They were asked how they had learned about the present situation and problems of American Indians.

To test whether or not their attitudes had changed, the students were questioned on the pretest and on the posttest about feelings of inferiority and pride toward their Indian background and the Indian people.

The course, itself, was made a thematic study of literature; some of the themes considered were the American Indian today, history of American Indians, and American Indian culture. Some of the literature studied was written by American Indians. Most of it was not. The class read about many different tribes of Indian people, but they read most about the Sioux.

The instructor obtained many bibliographies of books on Indians from which certain books were chosen for the course. Books which were thought to be interesting and relevant to young people were selected. Other instructors were consulted for recommendations of books which would be good for the class. Certain books were chosen because they were of high school reading level and they were applicable to a theme. Some were chosen because they concerned the lives of young Indian people. Some books were chosen because they concentrated on the Sioux. Availability of books was also a deciding factor for which books would be included.

Twelve books were chosen for class study. Fourteen paperback copies of each of the twelve were purchased. The class members were not required to read any of these twelve books; however, they knew that these would be the books discussed in class. No grades were given for the course and nothing was done to force the students to read. One-half credit was given, though. A book was discussed when the instructor felt that sufficient time had been given for the class members to read it.

One book read was Nobody Loves a Drunken Indian[1] by Clair Huffaker. The class read the abridged high school version from Project Necessities, ABT Associates, Brigham City, Utah. The main theme was modern day Indian revolution. The class discussed the modern day Indian, where he lives, his economics, characteristics, values, and problems. The main question was "What should Indians be doing?"

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[1] Clair Huffaker, Nobody Loves a Drunken Indian-Project Necessities Classroom Edition (Brigham City, Utah: Project Necessities, 1970).

At the time when the class read Nobody Loves a Drunken Indian, a group of Indians in South Dakota were reclaiming the Black Hills. The newspapers were full of stories of Indian militancy. Some of the students in the class had been exposed to some of the so called "Indian militants" over the previous summer. There were a great many parallels to be discussed. The class discussed Red Press vs. White Press. Besides examining daily newspapers, the class examined Indian newspapers and, especially, the Warpath published by a group called United Native Americans. The instructor used the Project Necessities manual for some ideas for discussion. The instructor recommended other books which the students might like to read concerning some of the things the class had discussed. Later on the class went to see the movie, Flap.

The other eleven books read and discussed in class are listed in an annotated bibliography (Appendix B). Besides the Project Necessities manual, other teaching guides came from Scholastic Book Services and Monarch Notes and Study Guides. Of the twelve books, some were novels, some were nonfiction, some were collections of short stories, biographies, and legends. The class also read some poems and selected short stories from other books. Emphasis was placed on literature written by Indians themselves, and the class noted works done by Indians and examined works done by students in Indian schools.

Besides the twelve books which were to be read by the class, the class had its own classroom library of 110 single copies of books. All of these books had something in them about Indians.

Some of them might be classed as westerns. A list of these books is found in Appendix C. When new books were added to this library, they were shown to the students and a little was said about each one. The students were also encouraged to obtain books from the high school library.

Each student kept a book card in English IV class on which he put down every book he read and the date on which he entered it on his card. From this card, his reading for the present year could be compared with his reading of the previous year, as indicated by the pretest. The American Indian Literature class was held in the room where the file with reading cards was kept.

Also available in the classroom were daily newspapers. For the first part of the course, the students were asked to look through the newspapers and to clip out anything concerning Indians and then to put them onto the bulletin board in the classroom. For about five weeks before the posttest was given, the students were not asked to clip from the newspapers; they were not asked to do anything with them. They were just available in the room if the students cared to read them or to clip from them. The instructor, then, clipped from the newspapers and put new clippings onto the bulletin board at a time when the students were not in the classroom.

The students were asked to bring to class anything they had heard, seen on television, or read about concerning Indians. The students did bring news, articles, movie reviews, letters, reports of things they had seen on television, and other things containing material which they thought would be of interest to the class.

During the last five weeks before the posttest was given, recent magazines were also placed in the classroom with the newspapers. Again, as with the newspapers, students were not asked to read or clip from them, but they were there for them if they wanted them.

The class saw six movies: How the West Was Won, The Stalking Moon, Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here, Soldier Blue, Flap, and Custer of the West. Some of them were based upon the contents of books we had read. Others were not, but they did concern Indians. The class took note of any movies or programs on television concerning Indians, any serials or special programs on Indian affairs. The class discussed the movie, Stay Away, Joe, which had been seen on television.

Besides the books, newspapers, and magazines available in the classroom, there were also newsletters, news releases, booklets, pamphlets, source books, Indian school papers, bulletins, pictures, and brochures containing information concerning American Indians. Other sources of material included movies for the classroom from nearby film libraries, collections of prints of works by artists such as C. M. Russell and Frederic Remington, maps, Indian posters, post cards, a Sioux calendar, records by modern Indian singers such as Buffy Ste. Marie and Floyd Westerman, and recordings of authentic Indian music.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The thirteen students in "American Indian Literature" class were pretested and posttested with a questionnaire to see whether or not a study of literature concerning American Indians would produce positive changes in a group of American Indian students. The following information concerning answers was gathered in percentages. Students were to choose and mark one statement or answer from groups of three or four.

To determine whether or not students learned to enjoy reading more, they were asked how much they enjoyed reading and how much they had enjoyed literature courses in high school. The findings are given in Table I.

TABLE I

PERCENTAGES OF ANSWERS
CONCERNING ENJOYMENT OF READING AND LITERATURE COURSES

Statement	Pretest	Posttest
You don't enjoy reading ever.	0	0
You occassionally enjoy reading.	61.5	61.5
You enjoy reading very much and you read often.	38.5	38.5

TABLE I (continued)

You haven't enjoyed literature courses in high school.	15.4	23.1
You have enjoyed literature courses in high school sometimes.	69.2	76.9
You have enjoyed literature courses in high school very much.	15.4	0

As evidenced by the table, the students indicated no change on answers questioning them on their enjoyment of reading. They did, in fact, indicate that they enjoyed literature courses less than they had before taking the course in American Indian Literature. Of the 15.4 percent of answers which had been given on the pretest for enjoying literature courses in high school very much, 7.7 percent slipped back on the posttest to enjoying literature courses sometimes and 7.7 slipped back even further to not enjoying literature courses in high school at all. A possible explanation for this might be that the time of the pretest was the beginning of the school year and the time of the posttest was toward the end of the year when students are usually tired of school.

To determine whether or not the students read more when the literature was concerned with American Indians, the number of books read was used as a measurement. The number of books read during one semester the previous year was compared with the number of books read during one semester when the students were in the course. The findings are given in Table II.

TABLE II

TOTAL NUMBER OF BOOKS READ BY STUDENTS IN ONE SEMESTER

	Previous Year	Year of Study
Total number of books read	59	144
Indian books	?	108

Displayed data imply that the students read 85 more books during the time when they were in American Indian Literature Class than they had the previous year. Most of the books read during the semester during the time they were in American Indian Literature were books concerning American Indians.

To determine whether or not the students came to see the value of "reading to learn," they were questioned concerning how often they read newspapers and magazines and how carefully they read them. The findings are given in Table III.

TABLE III

PERCENTAGES OF ANSWERS
CONCERNING READING OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

Statement	Pretest	Posttest
You read the newspaper		
Never	0	0
Sometimes	46.2	53.8
Often	53.8	46.2
You read magazines		
Never	0	0
Sometimes	53.8	46.2
Often	46.2	53.8

TABLE III (continued)

You read newspapers and magazines carefully in order to learn about things going on in the world		
Never	0	0
Sometimes	69.2	61.5
Often	30.8	38.5

The students indicated that they read newspapers less after having been in American Indian Literature Class. The percentage of 7.6 answers went from reading the newspaper often on the pretest to reading the newspaper sometimes on the posttest. The students indicated that they read magazines more after having been in the class. The percentage of 7.6 answers went from reading magazines sometimes on the pretest to reading magazines often on the posttest. This might be explained by the fact that certain magazines over the year carried articles with many pictures of American Indians besides other articles with pictures; the students seemed to enjoy these and may have become more interested in magazines than in newspapers. The students indicated that they read newspapers and magazines more carefully after having been in American Indian Literature Class. A percentage of 7.7 of the answers went from reading newspapers and magazines carefully sometimes on the pretest to reading them carefully often on the posttest.

To determine whether or not the students had learned about Indian culture from the study of American Indian Literature, they were questioned on how much they felt they knew about Indian culture. The findings from these answers are found in Table IV.

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGES OF ANSWERS
CONCERNING KNOWLEDGE OF INDIAN CULTURE

Statement	Pretest	Posttest
You feel that you know nothing about Indian culture and that you don't know about any Indian traditions or ways.	7.7	0
You feel that you know some about Indian culture and that you know about a few Indian traditions and ways.	38.5	46.2
You feel that you know a fair amount about Indian culture and that you know about quite a few Indian traditions and ways.	53.8	30.8
You feel that you know a great deal about Indian culture and that you know about many Indian traditions and ways.	0	23.1

The students' responses imply that they had learned more about Indian culture after having taken a course in American Indian Literature. A percentage of 7.7 of the answers went from knowing nothing about Indian culture on the pretest to knowing some about Indian culture on the posttest, and 23.1 percent of the answers went from knowing a fair amount about Indian culture on the pretest to knowing a great deal about Indian culture on the posttest.

To determine whether or not the students had learned about the history of American Indians from the study of American Indian Literature, the students were questioned on how much they felt they knew about Indian history. The findings from these answers are found in Table V.

TABLE V

PERCENTAGES OF ANSWERS
CONCERNING KNOWLEDGE OF INDIAN HISTORY

Statement	Pretest	Posttest
You feel that you know nothing about Indian history and that you don't know about any incidents or facts in the history of American Indians.	15.4	0
You feel that you know some about Indian history and that you know about a few incidents and facts in the history of American Indians.	38.5	53.8
You feel that you know a fair amount about Indian history and that you know about quite a few incidents and facts in the history of American Indians.	46.2	38.5
You feel that you know a great deal about Indian history and that you know about many incidents and facts in the history of American Indians.	0	7.7

The students' responses imply that they had learned about the history of American Indians from a course in American Indian Literature. A percentage of 15.4 of the answers went from knowing nothing about Indian history on the pretest to knowing some about Indian history on the posttest, and 7.7 percent of the answers went from knowing a fair amount about Indian history on the pretest to knowing a great deal about Indian history on the posttest.

To determine whether or not the students learned about the present situation and problems of American Indians so that they would have some ideas about how to solve problems, they were asked how many ideas they had about how to solve the problems of Indian people. The findings are seen in Table VI.

TABLE VI

PERCENTAGES OF ANSWERS
CONCERNING NUMBER OF IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS OF INDIANS

Statement	Pretest	Posttest
The number of ideas you have about how to solve problems of Indian people		
None	15.4	15.4
Some	84.6	76.9
Many	0	7.7

The students' replies imply only slight gain in knowledge of the present situation and problems of American Indians, as shown by the number of ideas they had to solve the problems. A percentage of 7.7 of the answers went from knowing some ideas about how to solve problems of Indians on the pretest to knowing many ideas about how to solve the problems on the posttest.

To determine whether or not the students had learned the value of "reading to learn," they were asked how they had learned about the history and culture of American Indians and how they had learned about the present situation of American Indians. Findings are given in Table VII.

TABLE VII

PERCENT OF STUDENTS
GIVING READING AS A LEARNING TOOL

Question	Learned by Reading	
	Pretest	Posttest
How have you learned about the history and culture of American Indians?	53.8	76.9
How have you learned about the present situation and problems of American Indians?	76.9	84.6

The responses imply that the students came to see the value of "reading to learn," The students were to list the ways they had learned about the history, culture, and present situation and problems of American Indians. More of the students indicated that reading was one of the tools used to learn about these things after they had been in American Indian Literature class. On the posttest a percentage of 23.1 more than on the pretest listed reading as a way they had learned about the history and culture of American Indians. On the posttest 7.7 percent more than on the pretest listed reading as a way they had learned about the present situation of Indians.

To determine whether or not they had gained in pride and identy, the students were asked questions concerning pride and inferior feelings. The findings are found in Table III.

TABLE VIII

PERCENTAGES OF ANSWERS
CONCERNING PRIDE AND IDENTITY

Question	Pretest	Posttest
Have you ever felt inferior because you were an Indian?		
Never	76.9	69.2
Sometimes	15.4	30.8
Most of the time	7.7	0
Always	0	0
Are you proud of your Indian background?		
Never	0	0
Sometimes	0	0
Most of the time	30.8	38.5
Always	69.2	61.5

TABLE VIII (continued)

Are you proud of the Indian people?		
Never	0	0
Sometimes	7.7	0
Most of the time	69.2	69.2
Always	23.1	30.8

After a study of American Indian Literature, the experimental group from this study reported a gain in their pride of the Indian people. A percentage of 7.7 moved from pride in the Indian people sometimes on the pretest to pride in the Indian people always on the posttest. They showed no gain in pride of Indian background. A percentage of 7.7 moved from pride in Indian background always on the pretest to pride in Indian background most of the time on the posttest. Their feelings of inferiority were shown to have stayed about the same, with 7.7 percent moving from having inferior feelings most of the time on the pretest to sometimes having inferior feelings on the posttest, but 7.7 percent also moving from never having inferior feelings on the pretest to sometimes having inferior feelings on the posttest. According to their responses on the pretest to the questions concerning pride and inferior feelings, the students showed a fairly strong sense of pride and identity before they took the course.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Major Questions to Assess Value of American Indian Literature Course

As evidenced by a questionnaire given before and after the course and by number of books read, the following questions were to be answered: 1. Do Indian students enjoy reading more, and 2. do they read more if the literature made available to them is about American Indians? 3. Do Indian students come to see the value of "reading to learn" from a study of Indian Literature? 4. Do Indian students learn effectively about their Indian culture and heritage and about the present situation and problems of American Indians from a study of Indian Literature? 5. Is an Indian Literature course an effective way to promote pride in culture and identity for Indian students?

Conclusions

According to the findings of this study, American Indian students at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School did read more when the material made available to them concerned American Indians. The students indicated that they did not learn to enjoy reading more. In fact, they indicated that they enjoyed literature courses less after they had taken American Indian Literature. It is possible

that time had something to do with these answers, since the pretest was given at the beginning of the school year when students are eager to begin school, and the posttest was given toward the end of the school year when most students are tired of school. Another possibility is that teaching techniques may have been at fault.

The students indicated that they did come to see the value of "reading to learn." They indicated that they did not read newspapers more, but did read magazines more on the posttest. It is possible that they read magazines more because they enjoyed the pictures in them. They indicated that they read magazines and newspapers more carefully on the posttest. More of the students indicated that reading was a tool used to learn about the history and culture of American Indians and about the present situation and problems of American Indians after they had been in American Indian Literature class.

Students indicated that they had learned about their Indian culture and heritage from the study of American Indian Literature. They indicated that they had learned only a small amount about the present situation and problems of American Indians from a study of American Indian Literature.

There was no evidence from this study and its statistics that an American Indian Literature course was an effective way to promote pride in culture and identity for Indian students, although they did show a small gain in pride in Indian people. The students in this experiment indicated a fairly strong sense of pride and identity before they took the course.

Recommendations

Because of the need for research in the area of curricula for Indian students, replications of this study should be tried with one or more of the following suggestions incorporated for better statistical control:

1. Gather larger samples (at least 30 in experiment and control groups) and gather samples with different degrees of Indian blood and different socio-economic status.
2. Use a questionnaire which would better measure attitudes toward pride and identity. This would have to be one especially prepared for Indian students.
3. Experiment with students of different ages to see at which level or levels, culture courses might be most effective.
4. Determine whether findings are statistically significant.

In essence, these recommendations are limitations which are constraints for the foregoing procedures. With better controls an American Indian Literature course seems to have some potential for helping Indians to deepen their pride in their cultural heritage.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

AMERICAN INDIAN LITERATURE QUESTIONNAIRE

Do not write your name on this questionnaire.

Purpose: In order to learn more about the students who have chosen to take American Indian Literature, I have prepared this questionnaire. Please answer the following questions honestly. Answer every question. Read each part carefully before answering.

Personal Data

A. Male _____

Female _____

B. Age _____

C. Your home address _____

D. Degree of Indian blood _____

E. How many years have you been in school? Include repeated grades, but do not include this present year. _____

F. Number of brothers and sisters you have _____

G. Your parents are (check one) _____together

_____divorced

_____separated

_____one is dead

_____both are dead

H. Father's occupation _____

Mother's occupation _____

I. Highest grade in school achieved by father _____

Highest grade in school achieved by mother _____

1. Approximately how many books did you read during one semester last year? _____

2. Which subject did you like best last year? _____

3. Which subject did you like least last year? _____

Check One-

4. _____ You don't enjoy reading ever.

   _____ You occasionally enjoy reading.

   _____ You enjoy reading very much and you read often.

5. _____ You haven't enjoyed literature courses in high school.

   _____ You have enjoyed literature courses in high school sometimes.

   _____ You have enjoyed literature courses in high school very much.

6. You read the newspaper
   _____ Never
   _____ Sometimes
   _____ Often

7. You read magazines
   _____ Never
   _____ Sometimes
   _____ Often

8. You read newspapers and magazines carefully in order to learn about things going on in the world
   _____ Never
   _____ Sometimes
   _____ Often

Check One-

9. _____ You feel that you know nothing about Indian culture and that you don't know about any Indian traditions or ways.

_____ You feel that you know some about Indian culture and that you know about a few Indian traditions and ways.

_____ You feel that you know a fair amount about Indian culture and that you know about quite a few Indian traditions and ways.

_____ You feel that you know a great deal about Indian culture and that you know about many Indian traditions and ways.

10. _____ You feel that you know nothing about Indian history and that you don't know about any incidents or facts in the history of American Indians.

_____ You feel that you know some about Indian history and that you know about a few incidents and facts in the history of American Indians.

_____ You feel that you know a fair amount about Indian history and that you know about quite a few incidents and facts in the history of American Indians.

_____ You feel that you know a great deal about Indian history and that you know about many incidents and facts in the history of American Indians.

11. How have you learned about the history and culture of American Indians?

12. How have you learned about the present situation and problems of American Indians?

13. Have you ever felt inferior because you were an Indian?

_____ Never

_____ Sometimes

_____ Most of the time

_____ Always

14. You are proud of your Indian background _____ Never

_____ Sometimes

_____ Most of the time

_____ Always

15. You are proud of the Indian people _____ Never

_____ Sometimes

_____ Most of the time

_____ Always

16. The number of ideas you have about how to solve problems of Indian people

_____ None

_____ Some

_____ Many

APPENDIX B

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